

# MISSIONARY HEROES COURSE

LIFE STORIES OF GREAT MISSIONARIES FOR  
TEEN AGE BOYS

ARRANGED IN PROGRAMS

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## John Williams Shipbuilder of the South Seas

SOURCE BOOK

“JOHN WILLIAMS, THE SHIPBUILDER”

By BASIL MATHEWS

*Program Prepared by*  
FLOYD L. CARR

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BAPTIST BOARD OF EDUCATION  
DEPARTMENT OF MISSIONARY EDUCATION  
276 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK CITY



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*Program based upon JOHN WILLIAMS, THE SHIPBUILDER*  
*by BASIL MATHEWS*  
Oxford University Press, \$1.00

## FOREWORD

THE *Missionary Heroes Course* for Boys meets a real need. It is a series of missionary programs for boys based on great biographies which every boy should know. Courses Number One and Number Two are now available, each providing programs for twelve months, which may be used in the monthly meetings of boys' groups. Other courses are in preparation and will be issued for subsequent years.

It is suggested that the leader purchase two copies of each booklet; one to be kept for reference and the other to be cut up to provide each boy with his assigned part. Some may prefer to purchase one booklet and typewrite the parts for assignment. In order to tie together the life incidents as they are presented by the boys, the leader should master the facts outlined in the biographical sketch and read carefully the volume upon which the program is based. These volumes are missionary classics and may be made the basis of a worthwhile library of Christian adventure.

Boys are keenly interested in stories of adventure and achievement and it is hoped that participation in the programs will lead many of the lads to read these great missionary biographies. Attention is called to the twenty-three other life-story programs now available for Courses Number One and Number Two, both of which are listed on the last page. The books upon which these programs are based can be ordered from the nearest literature headquarters. Portraits of these missionary heroes are also available for purchase at fifteen cents a copy.

While these programs have been developed to meet the needs of boys' organizations of all types—i.e., Organized Classes, Boy Scouts, Knights of King Arthur, Kappa Sigma Pi, etc.,—they were especially prepared for the chapters of the *Royal Ambassadors*, a missionary organization for teen age boys originating in the Southland and recently adapted to the needs of the Northern Baptist Convention by the Department of Missionary Education. We commend these materials to all lovers of boys.

WILLIAM A. HILL.

## PROGRAM FOR MEETING

1. Scripture Reading: Isaiah 44:15-17, Psalm 135:15-18. Tell the story of how Roma-tane, chief of Atiu Island, decided to renounce his idols (see pages 105-109 of "John Williams, The Shipbuilder," by Basil Mathews, reproduced in part in excerpt No. 9, following).
2. Prayer.
3. Hymn: "Jesus Calls Us O'er the Tumult." Tell the story of John Williams' call to the Christian life and to Christian service (see pages 23-27 of the above book and excerpt No. 6, following).
4. Introduction to the Life-Story\* (Based upon the brief sketch of John Williams following this program).
5. Boyhood and Early Training (pages 16, 17, 21, 22-23).
6. His Call to Service (pages 23-25, 26).
7. The Invitation to Riatea Island (pages 43-44, 44-46).
8. Purchasing the "Endeavour" (pages 73, 78, 82-84).
9. Chief Roma-tanes' Decision (pages 106-107, 109).
10. Rarotonga Burns Its Idols (pages 132-134).
11. Building the "Messenger of Peace" (pages 144-145, 148-151).
12. A Visit to England (pages 254-255, 257-258, 260-261).
13. His Martyrdom on Erromanga (pages 279-280, 282, 285-287).
14. The Memorial Ships: "John Williams I, II, III, IV" (pages 290-292).

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\* The leader should read the brief sketch in this booklet and also the book, "John Williams, The Shipbuilder," by Basil Mathews, upon which this program has been based.

## SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF JOHN WILLIAMS

JOHN WILLIAMS was born of Welsh parentage at Tottenham, a village not far from London, on June 29, 1796. When he was three years old, Captain Cook laid down his life on one of the South Sea Islands that he had discovered in his adventurous voyages. All England was stirred by his story and the growing boy felt the lure of the unknown seas.

When John was but fourteen, the family moved to the north side of London and he was apprenticed as a clerk to an iron worker. His duties centered in the store but his keen interest in mechanical matters drew him after hours to the workshop, where he mastered the secrets of the bellows and the anvil. One Sunday evening when he was planning to have a "good time" with some companions, the wife of his employer invited him to accompany her to church. He finally accepted the invitation and that night yielded his heart to Christ. "O Jehovah, give Thy word in my heart—and cover it up there that it may not be forgotten by me" became his prayer.

His pastor, Rev. Nathan Wilks, not only enrolled him in a class of young men preparing to enter the ministry but one day directed his thought to the progress of Christian missions on the Island of Tahiti. His soul responded to the challenge and he was later accepted for missionary service by the London Missionary Society. After a period of study with his pastor, he was ordained with eight other young men, one of whom was Robert Moffat.

On November 17, 1816, when but twenty years of age, he sailed with his bride (Mary Chauner of London) from the North Sea Islands of the Atlantic to the South Sea Islands of the Pacific. After touching at Sydney, Australia, they finally reached Eimeo, an island of the Society group, not far from Tahiti. No sooner had he landed than he put to good use his mechanical training by completing a half-built sailing boat. He next applied himself to the study of the language and within six months had made such good progress that he was sent to the island of Huahine to take up regular work.

The request of Tamatoa, chief of the strategic island of Raiatea, for missionaries, led to his removal in the fall of 1818,

to the island that was to be his home for nine eventful, triumphant years. His first task was the building of a suitable home, with the hope that the indolent Raiateans would be stimulated to build similar homes for themselves. In time they were all ambitious to learn how to erect substantial homes. He translated the Gospel of Luke, printed the booklet and established a school to teach the natives to read and write. On May 11, 1820, a large church building was dedicated amid great rejoicing, for the worship of Jehovah had replaced the bloody worship of Oro, the god of war.

But John Williams was not one to rest content with past achievements. Two helpers were now associated with him on Raiatea and he felt the call to pioneer work on the beckoning islands beyond. To quote his words: "For my own part, I cannot content myself with the narrow limits of a single reef." When, therefore, re-enforcements arrived in the person of Mr. and Mrs. Pitman, he sailed with them on April 26, 1827, to Rarotonga of the Hervey Islands, to found a new work. Chief Makea made them welcome, having been won to the worship of Jehovah by Papeiha of Raiatea, who had risked his life to tell the people of Rarotonga the "Good News."

Two centers for the work were developed, one at Avarua on the western end of the island with Williams in charge, and the other at Ngatangiia on the eastern end with Pitman in charge. Here, too, the islanders brought their idols to be burned and renounced their heathen rites. After the work became firmly established, John Williams determined to build a seventy-ton sea-going boat in order to be able to extend the work to the more distant islands of the South Seas. Finding an abandoned iron cable, left by a passing ship, he first constructed bellows to heat the iron that nails and bolts might be forged. Then he sought bent trees to secure the proper timbers and planks for the hull. The fibre of the hibiscus was used for ropes and bed-mats were woven together for sails. In time a seaworthy boat 60 feet long was launched under the name, "The Messenger of Peace."

The work could now be extended to even the distant islands and the next three years were years marked by the rapid expansion of the mission. After first visiting the Island of Raiatea, where he had labored for eight years, he sailed with a group of eight Society Island teachers whom he had trained, for the Namoan group. On the way he took on board Fauea, a Samoan chief who, far from home, had been won to the Christian faith. With his help, they secured a favorable hearing upon landing among the fierce Samoan cannibals. The chief provided homes for the Society Island teachers. When Williams returned two

years later to visit the Samoan group, he was met at one of the outlying islands with the greeting: "We are sons of the Word." On reaching Savaii Island, he found that King Malietoa had openly confessed his faith and that chapels had been erected and schools opened for the spread of the Christian religion.

Sixteen years had now passed since he had sailed from England for the South Seas. Three pressing needs turned his face toward the home-land; first, the printing of the Scriptures; second, the enlisting of needed recruits, and third, the securing of money to purchase a larger mission ship. The publishing of his popular book, "A Narrative of Missionary Enterprises in the South Sea Islands," played no small part in the attainment of all these goals. Funds were subscribed and the "Camden" was purchased to bear John Williams, his testaments, supplies and helpers, to the South Seas.

Upon his return he settled on Upolu Island of the Samoan group with a view to extending the promising work already begun in the Samoan Islands. As soon as his home-base had been established, he made a tour in the "Camden" of the islands where the work had already been established. Everywhere he was greeted with affectionate joy, island after island rejoicing to see "Viriamu" once more. The Rarotongans were made doubly happy by the bringing of 5,000 copies of the New Testament in their tongue.

But ever the lure of the regions beyond called this adventurous Columbus of the spirit. He must needs carry the Gospel to the New Hebrides, a group not as yet touched by Christian missions. Early in November, 1839, accompanied by Mr. Harris, an Englishman sojourning in the South Seas for his health, and Mr. Cunningham, British Vice-Consul for the Pacific Ocean, he sailed on the "Camden" on an errand of peace and good-will. They were cordially welcomed on Apia, Fotuna and Tanna Islands, but the natives of Erromanga showed signs of hostility. Yet he landed as usual and with his two companions was exploring near the shore when they heard the sounding of the dreaded war shell. Before they could reach the boat, the savages were upon them. Mr. Cunningham was able to make his escape but Mr. Harris and John Williams were killed by the clubs of their pursuers. He who had said: "I am engaged in the best of services, for the best of Masters and upon the best of terms" passed to his great reward. All England, as well as his loyal South Sea Islanders, mourned his loss and the children of England have kept his name in perpetual memory by building, as the need arose, one after another ship named "The John Williams" for the work in the South Seas to which he gave his life.

# INCIDENTS IN THE LIFE OF JOHN WILLIAMS

*Reprinted from "John Williams, The Shipbuilder"*  
*by Basil Mathews*

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## *Boyhood and Early Training. (Pp. 16, 17, 21, 22-23.)*

John Williams was born in the year when the *Duff* sailed out to the South Seas with Captain Wilson in command, and seventeen years after Captain Cook had been clubbed to death by savages on the beach of the far-off South Sea Island. Boys at school and men in workshops told one another the marvels that Captain Cook had seen as he sailed from island to island in the Pacific on his way round the world. The books that told the story of how he sailed round and round the world were read by everybody. . . .

The Williams children not only could play their "Let's pretend" games of sailing from Tottenham to Tahiti. They could go out into the real world beyond their garden wall, and walk in the summertime across the marshes of the river Lea, chasing one another and the butterflies over the grass, picking the marsh marigolds and daisies, and watching the slow barges go down the stream carrying their burdens for the great ships in the docks besides the Thames at Blackwall. . . .

There was, however, one thing that made him forget every other thought of London or school or even home. He would gaze fascinated into the dark cave-like workshop where the blacksmith at his forge, while the bellows sent the sparks flying, heated the iron, and then laid the glowing metal on the anvil to beat it into shape with ringing blows of his hammer.

To be able to take rough iron and timber, and to shape and make things from them with his own hands, to build a boat or weld an anchor—that was the life John Williams desired. . . .

One day, when John was fourteen years old, his father told him that he would not go to school any more.

"We are all going to leave Tottenham," he said, "and move into London; and you, John, will be an apprentice in an iron-monger's shop."

The family left the home in which John had lived all his life up till then; and they went down the great highway to their new home among the streets on the north side of London.

In the morning John's father took him to the shop where he was to earn his living as an apprentice to the ironmongery trade. The shop was full of the things John wanted to make or handle—hammers, chisels and screwdrivers, iron hinges and locks and keys, grates and pulleys, chains and hooks, knives, hatchets and axes. But as he busied himself in the shop his ear caught the ringing sound of a hammer on an anvil. It was the noise of the men at work making the goods for sale. For in those days, before the great factories were built, ironmongers made many of the things they sold.

It was difficult for John to stay at the counter selling nails when he wanted to be out in the workshop with a hammer. His master, Mr. Tonkin, smiled to himself as he saw the boy slip into the workshop to watch the smith. He was still more amused when, at the end of the day, after the shop was closed, John, instead of hurrying home, went out into the workshop, put on a leather apron, blew up the forge fire, and with swinging arms and face perspiring in the red glow of the flame, pounded and fashioned the gleaming iron.

For years John served his master the ironmonger in the shop; and in his spare time, trained himself at the anvil and the bench with sledge-hammer and vice and file till he was a first-class mechanic.

### *His Call to Service. (Pp. 23-25, 26.)*

One Sunday he arranged to meet some of his friends at a certain street corner for a jaunt in the evening. He reached the place at the time arranged and waited there, but his chums were late. Up and down the road he paced, growing more and more impatient. He became more angry still because people whom he knew began to pass on their way to church. He felt that he looked rather ridiculous.

Just then the wife of his master, the ironmonger, came walking by, and seeing John Williams standing looking moody and rather sheepish, she stopped and asked if he would not go with her to the service at the church to which she was going, which was the same that his mother attended. He said that he would go; not because he really wished to do so, but mainly out of anger at his companions who had failed him.

That evening the minister preached a sermon from the text: "What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

No one, looking at John, the ironmonger's apprentice, sitting there in the pew with his quiet reserved face lifted toward the speaker, could have realized that anything that was important to the world or exciting to John was happening. But, in that hour, John made the decision that took him from his little life in the ironmonger's shop and launched him on a sea of strange adventure among wild savage people in the enchanted islands of the South Seas. John decided to give his whole life into the hands of Him who first asked the question which, even as he listened there, the minister was repeating from the pulpit, "What is a man profited . . . ?" That quiet hour in which he saw his Master face to face was in reality John Williams's great adventure. For out of that hour and his obedience to the vision seen then all his adventures came; the perils on land and sea, among savage men and wild tempests.

On another day some time later, when John was already in his twentieth year, the minister of the Tabernacle was telling the people about the islands that Captain Cook had discovered, far off in the South Seas. He held out the even greater adventure—that of discovering, not the islands, but the real life of the islanders—savages who made their lovely coral islands into places of horror and terror; and sacrificed the blood of men in worship of their misshapen gods of ironwood and feathers. . . .

John—as he thought of the lives of the savage brown cannibals, and remembered all that he himself possessed which they were without—felt driven to believe that he was called to enlist as a Christian missionary for service among them. Just as he made a chain in the workshop, steadily beating out the glowing iron on the anvil link by link with his hammer, so he made this decision. It was not come to in a flash of sudden feeling, but was gradually tested link by link; and his determination, when his mind was fully made up, was as unbreakable as one of his own iron chains.

### *The Invitation to Raitatea Island. (Pp. 43-44, 44-46.)*

One day an island king came in a large canoe. "It is Tamatoa," the people said to one another, as a brown stalwart islander, six feet ten inches high, surrounded by his men, came up the beach. "It is the King of Raiatea."

"I have come," said Tamatoa, as he stood before the missionaries, "to speak to you that some of you will return with me to Raiatea and teach us." . . .

Only a few months before Tamatoa came from Raiatea to Huahine, King Pomare, with Mr. Wilson, one of the missionaries of Tahiti, had been blown by a terrible gale, which wrenched

the ship from her anchorage at Eimeo and drove her across the waters to Raiatea. Pomare, at Raiatea, had told some of the people how they in Eimeo had heard of God, the Father-Creator, who made all things and loved all men, and that in obedience to Him, they had given up slaying one another in war and killing men as sacrifices to the gods.

Tamatoa, the King of Raiatea, as he listened to Pomare and Mr. Wilson, believed that this was the true worship. He himself at once gave up the worship of Oro, the dreadful god of war. Oro was the greatest and most terrible god in all the islands. From islands near and far off men had been brought through the centuries to be slain on Oro's blood-stained island *marae* at Raiatea as sacrifices. More blood of men had been shed to Oro than to the gods in all the islands of the Society group. To end the worship of Oro in Raiatea and begin there the worship of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ would therefore mean the change of the life of all the Society Islands, of which Raiatea was the leader.

But Pomare and Mr. Wilson had been obliged to go back from Raiatea to Eimeo, before Tamatoa had time to learn much. Tamatoa, who could wield a spear and a club or a canoe paddle with any man, and could read the coming storm in the colour of the sky and in the surface of the sea, could not hold or guide a pen or read a line in a book. But he could listen, and he wished to hear more; so he had hurried over the sea in his canoe to Huahine to ask a missionary to come to Raiatea.

Even while Tamatoa was speaking to the missionaries on Huahine, John Williams with difficulty held himself back from calling out to his friends, "Here am I, send me." But he knew that it was right that he, as the youngest of them all, for he was still only twenty-two, should wait to hear if some of the older workers would wish to go to Raiatea. To his great joy the older ones did not wish to go, so he and young Threlkeld, with their wives and the two babies, set sail from Huahine.

### *Purchasing the "Endeavour."* (Pp. 73, 78, 82-84.)

Captain Cook, Williams remembered, had hoisted the ensign of Britain on many of these shores, claiming them for King George. John dreamed of bringing all those islands into the empire of our Lord whose cross is blazoned upon that British flag.

As Williams paced the beach in the moonlight and looked out over the ocean, and as he bent his head over Cook's old charts of the Pacific, tracing island after island by the light of the

coco-nut lamp, the dream grew to a determination and a plan. He sat down and wrote home to the Directors of the Society in London :

“To visit and keep up frequent intercourse with the adjacent islands we only want a fine schooner of about twenty to twenty-five tons. . . .”

It was the first thought that any man had had of a ship that would belong to the Missionary Society to cruise among the islands. As Alfred the Great first dreamed of a navy for the people of England, Williams worked and wrote and planned for a Ship of Peace. . . .

The air of Sydney, meeting with friends, and the care of the doctor, quickly made Mrs. Williams well and her husband got very much better. John lost no time in beginning to seek for a ship. His mother had left some money to him, and Williams wrote to London to the Directors to say, “Whatever the sum may be, whether £500 or £1,000, I have, rather than not achieve the object, agreed to advance.”

A ship was soon purchased—a new schooner of from eighty to ninety tons, called the “*Endeavour*.” . . .

Soon after Williams reached Raiatea the schooner *Endeavour* came sailing into the lagoon from Sydney, having called at Aitutaki on the way to gather news of Papeiha and Vahapata. The chiefs of Aitutaki sent a message by the captain of the *Endeavour* to Williams, saying :

“Tell Viriamu that if he will visit us, we will burn our idols, destroy our maraes, and receive the word of the true God.”

Tamatoa, the King of Raiatea, was very proud of the *Endeavour*. He arranged with Williams that he and his subjects should pay for her, so that she would become their very own, the ship of Raiatea. As they had no money, he arranged to fill her with a precious cargo of coco-nut oil and arrowroot to be sold to the merchants of Sydney.

How glad King Tamatoa was, when he saw the ship, can be gathered from a letter which he sent to Britain to the Directors of the Society, without John Williams or Threlkeld knowing anything about what he was doing.

This is what the King of Raiatea wrote :

“Raiatea, July 9, 1822.

“Dear Friends :

“May you have health and peace, brethren, through Jesus Christ our true Lord.

“This is my speech to you, brethren. Don’t think of your money (spent on the ship) that it is lost. We are collecting property to purchase the money that has been consumed: and when sufficient property is collected we will return the money to you to whom the money belongs. . . .

“A ship is good; for it means useful property will come to our lands, and our bodies be covered with decent cloth. But this is another use of the ship, when we compassionate the little lands near to us, and desire to send two from among us to those lands to teach them the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the good word of the Kingdom.

“Behold! two of our number here are gone to Rurutu; and at Aitutaki are two others belonging to us. They are teaching the word of God to those lands that did not know the name of Jesus Christ, and they are showing to them the path of salvation.

“We have received all the deceitful, lying gods from Rurutu. They are now in our possession, and the Rurutuans are worshipping Jesus Christ, the true God. . . .

“There is another good thing of our ship. When we desire to see their faces again (i. e., of the teachers at Rurutu and Aitutaki) or to send little properties to them, we have the means. Letters will also reach them, by which they will hear and know the good word we are hearing; and, by means of this ship, they will learn from us all the good customs, and how to act. . . .

“May you have health and peace in your dwelling in Beritani, through Jesus Christ!

“Tamatoa, King of Raiatea.”

### *Chief Roma-tanes’ Decision. (Pp. 106-107, 109.)*

He climbed from his canoe up the side of the schooner. No sooner was he on board than the chief of Aitutaki took him by the hand and led him to a place on the boat where he could talk quietly to him.

“We have overthrown the maraes of Aitutaki,” he said to Roma-tane, for that was the name of this Atiu chief. “The great idols we have burned with fire; the smaller ones, they are down in the ship (and he pointed into the hold). We have made a great new white house of *toka tunu* (roasted stones), and in it we worship the one true God. All the sacrifices of living men and maidens, slain in the maraes of the gods, do nothing. They are useless, for they do not make God forgive us. Mercy comes to us only through the Son of God, Jesus, who came to die for us.”

The tall brown chief of Atiu listened with wonder, hardly believing that this could be true, nor really understanding it. Williams saw the face of the Christian chief of Aitutaki gleaming with eager desire as he went on:

"I advise you to receive the good Word. Once your gods in Atiu and our gods in Aitutaki were the same gods. But now mine at Aitutaki are burned and cast down. Burn yours! Let there be one God for us both, the one true God. Come!"

He led the astonished Roma-tane down the companion-ladder into the hold of the schooner. There he showed the chief the ancient gods of Aitutaki lying, like so many baulks of old timber. It was Saturday, and the chief was persuaded to stay on board over the Sabbath.

When day came, and all on board the ship gathered together for worship, Roma-tane sat with the others so that he could see their worship and listen to more of this strange new teaching. . . .

In the middle of the talk he stood up, walked about in excitement, stamping on the floor with astonishment and disgust with himself for having been so blind as to think the wooden idols were really alive.

"Never more," he said, stamping again, "will I bow down to them and sacrifice to them. Eyes, it is true, they have," he went on, "but wood cannot see; ears they have, but wood cannot hear."

Roma-tane could not sleep, for his mind was aflame with these new ideas. All night he sat there with the chiefs and the teachers asking questions, and learning more and more about the Father-God shown by Jesus Christ.

When John Williams came on deck as the sun rose on Monday, the teachers ran to him with faces shining with joy.

"Roma-tane says that he will raze his maraes to the ground, burn his idols, and begin at once to build a house in which to worship Jehovah."

### *Rarotonga Burns Its Idols. (Pp. 132-134.)*

"One day, to my surprise, one of the priests of the gods came to me leading his ten-years-old boy.

"'Take care of my boy,' he said to me, 'I am going to burn my god, and I do not want my god's anger to hurt the boy. Ask your God to protect him.' So the priest went home.

"Next morning, quite early, before the heat of the sun was very great, I looked out and saw the priest tottering along with

bent and aching shoulders. On his back was his wooden god. Behind him came a furious crowd, waving their arms, and crying out:

“ ‘Madman, madman, the god will kill you.’

“ ‘You may shout,’ gasped the priest, ‘but you will not change me. I am going to worship Jehovah, the God of Papeiha.’

“With that he threw down the god at my feet. My brother-teacher ran to bring a saw. First we cut off the god’s head, and then sawed him into big logs. Some of the people rushed away in dread. Others—even some of the newly converted Christians—hid in the bush and peered through the leaves to see what would happen. I lit a fire, and we threw the logs on it. As the flames blazed up, the other priests of the fallen god called out:

“ ‘You will die! You will die!’

“To show that the god was just a log of wood I took a bunch of bananas and placed them on the glowing ashes of the fire. When the bananas were roasted, we sat down and ate them.

“ ‘The watching crowd waited, awe-struck, and looked to see us fall dead, but nothing happened.

“Immediately afterwards, a chief, Tinomana, sent for me and Tiberio to go to his home among the mountains.

“ ‘I wish to be a Christian,’ he said. ‘What must I do?’

“ ‘Destroy your maraes and burn your idols,’ we said.

“ ‘Come with me,’ he answered, ‘and see them destroyed.’

“Taking a lighted torch, he set fire to the temple, to its *atarau* (altar) and to the *unus* (the sacred pieces of carved wood which decorated the marae).

“They brought four great idols and laid them at our feet.”

## *Building “The Messenger of Peace.” (Pp. 144-145, 148-151)*

In all the long story of the building of ships, the record of no determination has come down to us that seemed more impossible to achieve.

There were trees growing upon the island, but no saw to divide them into planks. There was no iron in the rocks for the inner supports of a ship and to make its anchor. Williams had no canvas for sails, nor rope for rigging. There was no machinery for making the great ribs of wood that a ship must have, or curving the stout planks to the shape of the hull. Williams had never even seen a ship built, nor had any Rarotongan

knowledge of how to do more than hack a canoe out of a tree-trunk with a hatchet.

Yet on that island Williams set himself to build a seventy- or eighty-ton ship, fit for ocean voyages.

On the beach lay an old chain cable which a ship's company had left there years before when they had tried to land and had been forced to fly in terror from the savages. John also had a few tools, with a pickaxe, a hoe, an adze, some hatchets and hammers.

The chain cable might be hammered into nails and bolts. But to mould the iron a forge was needed. He had no anvil, nor coal for a forge-fire, nor had he the necessary bellows. . . .

Grey-haired old Rarotongan men, wondering children, the king, the fishermen, and the peasants came crowding down to see the new wonder. They could hardly believe their eyes when they saw two pieces of the chain-iron made white-hot in the fire, and then beaten into one piece.

“Why did we not think of heating the hard stuff also,” they said to one another, “instead of beating it with stones? What a reign of dark hearts Satan's is!”

Since there was no saw, John Williams was obliged to make wedges and slit the trees in two with these. Then the Rarotongans—fitting hatchet-heads to crooked pieces of wood,—adzed the split trees down to planks of the thickness needed for the ship. It was impossible to bend these, as John Williams had no steaming apparatus. When, therefore, a bent or twisted timber was needed, a bamboo was bent to the shape that was wanted. Holding this in his hand, one of the islanders would go into the woods and search till he had found a tree or branch that had grown in the shape that was needed. This was then cut down and split into two halves, to be used one on each side of the ship.

The great keel was laid down and the ribs fixed to it with large wooden pins—called tree-nails—which Williams made. Then the planks, which the natives had adzed to some smoothness, were fixed in place by boring auger-holes through the inner and outer planks and the ribs, and driving tree-nails through the three thicknesses. This held all firmly together. There was no oakum for caulking the seams in these timbers; but this he made from coco-nut husk, dried banana-stump, and shredded native cloth. This was then forced between the timbers with chisel and mallet.

The hull of the vessel was now well on the way to completion; but Williams had neither cordage nor sails. Having constructed a rope-making machine, he took the bark of the hibiscus-tree—a

tree bearing a lovely flower which the people wear in their hair—and had its fibres twisted into strong rope for hoisting the sails and for making the rigging. For sails he took the native mats which the Rarotongans use for sleeping upon, and quilted them so that they would resist the wind.

To raise and furl sail, the ship must have blocks (with little grooved wheels—called sheaves—in them) through which the ropes could run. Williams could only make the sheaves to these blocks properly if he had a lathe. He therefore set to work to make a turning-lathe. With this he turned the sheaves, making them from the ironwood (*aito*), a tree which grew on the island shores by the water, its lovely leaves drooping down till they brushed the surface of the sea.

Within fifteen weeks of laying down the keel, everything was now ready for sailing, save hanging the rudder. This proved very difficult, for more iron was needed than the old chain cable would provide. Williams, therefore, took a pickaxe, a cooper's adze, and a large hoe, and with these made very strong pintles on which the rudder would swing. But, as the very life of the ship depended on the power to steer her, Williams made a substitute for a rudder which could be used if the tiller went out of order. The anchor was made of a crate of wood filled with stone.

The ship was complete down to the very pump for clearing her hull from water. This pump greatly attracted the King of Rarotonga. When the ship had been launched, the King again and again ordered his favourite stool to be carried on board, and he sat on deck for hours amusing himself by pumping up the bilge water.

John Williams named his ship "*The Messenger of Peace*," and she flew the flag of the dove of peace. His ambition for her was that she would carry the message of "Peace on earth" to islands which now were fighting tribe against tribe and island against island.

#### *A Visit to England. (Pp. 254-255, 257-258, 260-261.)*

In Raiatea he found the house that he had built falling to ruin; the garden where he had played with the boys all rank with gross weeds; the fences grown with moss and broken down. The people clung round Williams; a chief with all his passion pleaded with him to stay and lead them. He could see that these brown people, whose fathers and grandfathers for ages had been wild savages, were not yet strong enough to stand alone without their "great white chief" to lead them.

But the mother of his boys was desperately ill; he had not seen Britain for seventeen years; he had plans for a ship that

should be always passing from island to island so that none should fall into such neglect as had come on Raiatea. He would call to the people of Britain to give such a ship to the South Seas.

So he tore himself away from the weeping islanders who had been his companions since seventeen years ago, when he landed on Raiatea with his wife and baby.

The sails filled, and the ship, as she gathered way, ran through the tide-rip of the reef channel and began to throw the white spray aside. She headed for Tahiti. John stood in the stern watching the shore that he knew better than any place in the world; the dazzling white coral beach flinging back the blazing rays of the sun; the fringe of palms, their brown trunks crowned with green fronds; then the soaring mountains thrusting their pinnacles up into the intense blue of the sky and reflected in the emerald green of the still lagoon. . . .

At last the man in the crow's nest shouted, "Land ho!" and they strained their eyes to see the white cliffs that seemed to the eyes of John and Mary Williams, who had not looked on them for nearly eighteen years, to be more beautiful than the loveliest coral island in the Pacific Ocean.

Brothers and sisters, now married and with children who called John Williams and his wife "Uncle" and "Aunt," greeted them. The Directors of the London Missionary Society listened with wonder to the amazing stories of Raiatea and Rarotonga and all the other islands, the stories that we have read in this book, which seemed to them more wonderful than all the fairy-tales, and were true as true. From Scotland to the South Coast and from Wales to the North Sea, Williams traveled over Britain, telling to crowded meetings the wonderful miracles of transformation of those island people from ferocious cannibals to heroic Christians like Papeiha.

"He told such tales as no man ever told before," wrote a great orator of that day who often heard him speak. "He spoke as a messenger from fairy-land. . . . Every sentence bore the deep impress of truth. . . . The conviction which darted into the mind of every hearer was, This is an honest man!"

So moved were the people who heard him, that they would sob and laugh and then break into uncontrollable cheering. They felt that they would do and give anything to help this glorious work. . . .

John Williams's brain was planning, however, through all this time, to achieve the thing of which he had been dreaming for so many years: to buy a ship that should be stronger, sail faster, and hold more people than the stout old *Messenger of*

*Peace.* He wanted this ship to be used by the London Missionary Society for sending white and brown missionaries from island to island, and especially to press on to the cannibal shores of the islands of the Western Pacific.

In all parts of Britain he spoke of his plan; and at length men had given enough money to buy a fine brig, the *Camden*, in which Williams and sixteen other missionaries were to sail from the Thames to the South Seas.

The feeling that had made the cab-driver refuse to take a fare from John Williams, the wish to serve the great venture in which Williams was risking his life, moved many people.

A ship's pilot came one day saying, "I wish to have the privilege of piloting the *Camden* out of port for nothing."

The regular pilot's fee for this was from £20 to £25.

Another man, who made his living by supplying ships with pure, filtered water for long voyages, after he had put twenty tons of water on the *Camden*, refused to be paid.

"I know what this ship is going for, and I too will have the pleasure of giving a cup of cold water."

Presents of food of all kinds flowed in on the *Camden*; one friend, Sir Cutting Smith, stocking all the pens and coops on the deck with the finest sheep and the best poultry on his estate.

What made Williams happiest of all, however, was that his great friend, Captain Morgan, a splendid navigator, who knew all the islands of the South Seas, took command of the ship.

A steamship, the *City of Canterbury*, was chartered to carry the missionaries from London Bridge out to the *Camden* at Gravesend. Four hundred friends came on that early spring morning on board the *City of Canterbury*. The east parapet of London Bridge was lined with others who had come down to wave farewell.

As the steamship began to move, Williams stood on a platform and waved to the people on London Bridge. In an instant a thousand handkerchiefs were fluttering in response; and a cheer went up, but many could not cheer for very sorrow.

### *His Martyrdom on Erromanga. (Pp. 279-280, 282, 285-287.)*

When dawn came up, Williams, Harris, Cunningham (British Vice-Consul in the Pacific), and Captain Morgan went aboard the *Camden*. With them were twelve brown teachers for the unknown islands of the west. The brig's sails were spread

and her course set westward. She ran like a deer along the plain of the great ocean. By the Tuesday she had run six hundred miles in less than three days, and sighted Rotuma.

As they left Rotuma, Captain Morgan, the finest navigator of the South Seas of his day, and Williams, the greatest of the heroes of the Pacific, strode up and down the deck together talking of the future.

“We are sixty miles from the nearest of the Hebrides,” said Captain Morgan. “We shall be there early in the morning.”

These were the islands of which Williams had dreamed for years. At last he was to reach these wildest shores of the Pacific. Once they were captured, he would press on to the steaming shores of cannibal New Guinea itself. . . .

The brig stood northward for Erromanga—the island from whose shore even Captain Cook had turned away, pursued by spears and stones and arrows. . . .

“See,” said Williams, “there are boys playing on the beach; that is a good sign.”

“Yes,” answered Captain Morgan, “but there are no women, and (as we all know) when the savages mean mischief they send their women away.”

Williams now waded ashore and Cunningham followed. Captain Morgan stopped to throw out the anchor of his little boat and then stepped out and went ashore, leaving his crew of four brown islanders resting on their oars.

Williams and his two companions scrambled up the stony beach, over the grey stones and boulders alongside the tumbling brook, for over a hundred yards. Turning to the right they were lost to sight from the water’s edge. Captain Morgan was just following them when he heard a terrified yell from the crew in the boat.

Williams and his friends had gone into the bush. Harris in front, Cunningham next, and Williams last. Suddenly Harris, who had disappeared in the bush, rushed out followed by yelling savages with clubs. Harris rushed down the bank of the brook, stumbled, and fell in. The water dashed over him, and the Erromangans, with the red fury of slaughter in their eyes, leapt in and beat in his skull with clubs.

Cunningham, with a native at his heels with lifted club, stooped, picked up a great pebble and hurled it full in the face of the savage who was pursuing him; the man was stunned. Turning again, Cunningham leapt safely into the boat.

Williams, leaving the brook, had rushed down the beach to leap into the sea. Reaching the edge of the water, where the beach falls steeply into the sea, he slipped on a pebble and fell into the water.

Cunningham, from the boat, hurled stones at the natives who rushed at Williams as he lay prostrate in the water with a savage over him with uplifted club. The club fell, and other Erromangans, rushing in, beat him with their clubs and shot with their arrows. Boys rushed down and beat his body with stones until the ripples of the beach ran red with his blood.

The hero of a hundred islands was dead—the first martyr of Erromanga.

## *The Memorial Ships: “John Williams I, II, III, IV”* (Pp. 290-292.)

The boys and girls of Britain, especially those who had heard his voice and seen his smile, were sad. But they knew that what John Williams would desire above everything would be that the work for which he had given his life should go on.

The brig *Camden* came back to Britain. A new ship was needed. The boys and girls of Britain went among their friends.

“We want to build a new ship in memory of John Williams.”

They collected over £6,000. A ship was bought, and the name *John Williams* painted on her bows. Captain Morgan commanded her, while the flag of the doves of peace flew from her mast.

For twenty years the *John Williams* sailed the South Seas, visited islands which he had never seen, and kept the great work alive in the islands that he loved. At last, in 1864, she was wrecked on a reef as she was carrying the workers from island to island near Rarotonga.

The boys and girls set to work and raised £11,000 for the *John Williams II*; but she was wrecked on her first voyage. Undaunted, the children built again in the very next year (1868) the *John Williams III*. On her starboard bow was painted “Peace on Earth,” and on the port bow “Good will to men.”

*John Williams IV*, which sails the Pacific now, is a steam yacht, with her moorings at Sydney, and she runs a journey of fifteen thousand miles, some of which she covers three times a year. Today she carries Samoan teachers even to cannibal New Guinea, where John Williams had dared to dream that some day the Word would go.

Vilamu is dead; but through the children of Britain he is still John Williams, the Shipbuilder.

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